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license. Evidently something has been lost between *Posthumius* and *idem*. This must have been a very short word, perhaps only an abbreviation or symbol; otherwise it is not likely that it would have escaped notice. It is also fair to assume that this abbreviation, if such it was, resembled very closely the preceding or following letters, so that it was confused with them and contributed to such combinations as are especially noticeable in *posthinus*, etc. A word that would fit such conditions is the adverb *vero*. Its abbreviated form *û* or *u* (see E. Monaci, *Esempi di scrittura latina*, Rome, 1906, plate 48; Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 97) is certainly all that is to be desired for brevity, and its position between *ui* and *i* would be most confusing, particularly if the letters were written close together. Its insertion makes the meter perfect.

With this emendation the distich will read:

Saevius Nicanor Marci libertus negabit:

Saevius Posthumius vero idem ac Marcus docebit

and will admit of a sensible interpretation: "Saevius Nicanor, the freedman of Marcus, will not say (it); but Saevius Posthumius, the same man as Marcus, will declare (it)," i.e., "What Saevius Nicanor, the avowed freedman will not say, M. Saevius Posthumius, the possible freeman, will declare." There seems to be a play upon the double meaning of the phrase *idem ac Marcus*, viz., "the same man as Marcus" and "the same man and also a Marcus." But of course it is exceedingly difficult to reach a positive conclusion about the translation without the context, since the verbs have a variety of connotations.

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#### NOTE ON THE SIXTH PLATONIC EPISTLE

The acceptance of this epistle by such scholars as Eduard Meyer and Raeder, and the *obiter dictum* of von Wilamowitz (*Aristoteles und Athen*, I, 334) "den Platonischen Brief könnte ich sehr wol für echt halten," make it worth while to recur to the question. No decisive result has as yet been reached by the way of attack and defense of the historical allusions and the diction. Ritter (*Neue Untersuchungen ueber Platon*) and Hackforth (*The Authorship of the Platonic Epistles*), who reject the letter, practically concede this and rest their case on the content of two sentences.

Ritter, without assignment of reasons, affirms that Plato could not have written the sentence 322D: *πρὸς τῇ τῶν εἰδῶν σοφίᾳ τῇ καλῇ ταύτῃ, φήμ' ἐγώ, καίπερ γέρον ὢν*. Hackforth justifies his rejection of the letter by emending the mystic concluding sentence and so finding in it a forger's reminiscence of *Symposium* 197b.

I too would rest the spuriousness of the letter on these two sentences, but have something further and, I believe, new to add. In the first sentence

Ritter does not quote the words *φήμ' ἐγὼ καίπερ γέρων ὢν*, of which Hackforth says, "I see no sense in this." They seem to me to constitute whatever point the silly sentence possesses. The complacent characterization of the "wisdom of the ideas" as *τῇ καλῇ ταύτῃ* by a foolish equivocation suggests "this fair one," and the aged Plato is supposed to smack his lips with senile eroticism and add, "I can still talk of the fair." The more drastic *γέρων ὢν* of Aristophanes *Birds* 1256 illuminates perhaps a little too glaringly the meaning. No serious Platonist of course will attribute such drivel to Plato.

The mysticism of the concluding sentence has given offense to many critics, and Ritter has sufficiently answered Raeder's desperate attempts to read a rational Platonic meaning into it.

The friends to whom the epistle is addressed are urged to read it together: *ὡς οἷόν τ' ἐστὶν πλειστάκις, καὶ χρῆσθαι συνθήκῃ καὶ νόμῳ κυρίῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν δίκαιον, ἐπομνύντας σπουδῇ τε ἅμα μὴ ἁμούσῃ καὶ τῇ τῆς σπουδῆς ἀδελφῇ παιδιᾷ, καὶ τὸν τῶν πάντων θεὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶν τε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, τοῦ τε ἡγεμόνος καὶ αἰτίου πατέρα κύριον ἐπομνύντας, ὃν, ἂν ὄντως φιλοσοφῶμεν, εἰσόμεθα πάντες σαφῶς εἰς δύναμιν ἀνθρώπων εὐδαιμόνων*. Here the repeated *ἐπομνύντας* is a stumbling block. Richards (Platonica) suggests either the omission of the first case or the substitution of *λαμβάνοντας* for it. Hackforth more plausibly reads *ἐφυμνοῦντας* for the second with reference to *Symposium* 197c. This, however, does not quite explain *κύριον*. If we read *ἐπονομάζοντας* all, I think, is clear. We are to name the unknown God by his appellation in the Septuagint and by one of his chief designations in Philo. In this way we shall attain to such knowledge of him as is possible for man.

The distinction between the *πάντων ἡγεμόνα* and the *ἡγεμόνος καὶ αἰτίου πατέρα* may perhaps go back to *Philebus* 30D: *ἐν μὲν τῇ τοῦ Διὸς ἐρεῖς φύσει Βασιλικὴν μὲν ψυχὴν, βασιλικὸν δὲ νοῦν ἐγγίγνεσθαι διὰ τὴν τῆς αἰτίας δύναμιν* with the context and with suggestions perhaps drawn from the *ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα* of the *Timaeus* and the *ἐν πατρός τινος ἰδέα εἶναι τὸ καλὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ* of *Hippias major* 297B. But it would be uncritical to apply exact logic to the mental processes of this scribbler. It is enough to observe the Philonic or neo-Platonic tendency to seek ever a remoter God behind the Creator, and if we must name him to borrow an appellation from the Jews or the Orient.

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